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⇒CONTRIBUTED & NOTES.⇐

Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg.—Hengstenberg was for forty years the recognized leader of orthodoxy in Germany, among scholars by his books, among the people by his weekly Evangelical Gazette. No one was more bitterly hated by rationalists of all shades, for no one did more to turn the tide against them. When he went to Berlin in 1824 the compromise theology of Marheinecke, Schleiermacher and Neander was dominant there, while in Halle, the old fortress of sound doctrine, Wegscheider was making light of miracle and prophecy. It was his exposure of Wegscheider's views through his paper that at once made his name notorious. It was this bold attack followed by the long Halle controversy that started the wedge which split the power of infidelity in Germany. In this strife of tongues he lost the favor of Neander, Tholuck thought him too rash, the ministers of state would gladly have persuaded the king to declare his chair vacant, and the press, secular and religious, would, if it had been possible, have buried him under an avalanche of calumny, but the hidden people of God recognized in him a second Luther, and his work stood because it was of God. Hengstenberg is the name of a long line of preachers in Westphalia of noble ancestry. Ernst was a delicate child and yet so intellectual that he entered the University of Bonn at 17 years of age, and was a teacher at Berlin at 22. He could not finish his theological studies at Berlin as he desired. A happy necessity brought him under the holier influence of the Missionary Society of Basle, one of whose instructors he became. Here it was that family bereavement and personal sickness led to his conversion, and henceforth the shrinking invalid became the fearless servant of God. Excepting his commentaries on the Gospel and Revelation of John, his main works pertained to the exegesis and higher criticism of the Old Testament. Chief among them stand his Christology, his commentary on the Psalms, and his History of the People of God. He defended the authenticity of the Pentateuch, and the integrity of Isaiah and Daniel. In his masterly little brochure entitled "Egypt and the Books of Moses" he silenced the batteries of Bohlen and other rationalists upon supposed discrepancies in the early Scriptures. In preparing this book as every other he supplied himself with all the literature on the subject. For his tract on Free Masonry he collected forty volumes. Such was his wealth that he was not dependent on the Berlin libraries, but accumulated probably the richest private library on the Old Testament. Preparations for war with France prevented the appeal of the University faculty for the purchase of the collection from being heard by the government, and it passed into American hands, chiefly through the foresight of a Chicago banker, Hon. J. Y. Scammon, and it now lies with the Ide and American Bible Union libraries on the shelves of the Baptist Union Theological Seminary at Morgan Park, Illinois, having been purchased by Hon. E. Nelson Blake. Hengstenberg was only professor of Theology, an humble believer in Christ, but higher titles of honor he never sought, he did not know of.

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